

The Statesman Is Prepared to Hear God's Voice

We have made the argument that the best way to ensure that we can operate as a Statesman is to allow ourselves to be an instrument in the hand of Almighty God. An essential part of being His instrument involves the capacity to receive His instructions.

This is where it becomes essential to know how to be listening for those instructions. We have a beautiful example of the Ethiopian Minister in the book of Acts:

An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip (one of Jesus' original disciples): "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ... So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a ... high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud. The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot." When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so He does not open His mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who will describe His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.

The [official] replied to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or another person?" So Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning from that Scripture. As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water! What would keep me from being baptized?" And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the [official] went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer. But he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:26-39).

We have valuable insight here into the way God works in the life of the official who is tender toward Him. Here we have the Minister of the Treasury or Finance, apparently highly trusted by the Head of Government. He was apparently very tender spiritually and prepared to hear from God. He put himself in a place where he could potentially hear from God. He had already travelled to Jerusalem to worship God. God often speaks when we are in a worship setting and worshipping our Lord. Worship can be, and must be, done privately. The more we can maintain an attitude of worship, the more God can speak to us.

Then, as he was travelling home, he placed himself in a further position to potentially hear from God by studying God's instruction manual.

From historical evidence we recognize that God speaks to the leader. This is especially significant because of insight shared by Jesus as He taught His disciples:

Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it (Luke 10:23-24).

From this, we must recognize that God attempts to work in the hearts of government decision-makers similar to the way He did with the Old Testament prophets. Hence, it seems imperative that leaders be prepared for God to speak to them and also to do everything they can to facilitate His doing this.

Elijah described God speaking; to him in “a soft whisper” (1 Kings 19:12).

We have the example of God speaking to the prophet Samuel while still a young boy. After Samuel misunderstood God’s first two attempts to speak to Samuel, we have this record:

Now Samuel had not yet experienced the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. Once again, for the third time, the LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli (his mentor), and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. He told Samuel, “Go and lie down. If He calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, “Samuel, Samuel!” Samuel responded, “Speak, for Your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:7-10).

One of the great ways to hear God’s voice is by praying to Him. He has challenged us:

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3).

He has promised us:

You will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you (Jeremiah 29:12).

Similarly, as we begin the practice of listening for God’s voice, it becomes clearer to recognize. President Lincoln had apparently recognized this as he expressed:

I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I have no sufficient facts upon which to found it. I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.

As he expressed on another occasion, I believe Lincoln learned that the key is a commitment to obey that voice:

*If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected to my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me....It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. **And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!***

I am convinced that it was his commitment to obey that voice that opened the door to hearing it. This truth is elaborated in God’s Word:

For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose (Philippians 2:13).

In keeping with what we learn from Lincoln and from God’s servants, may we pray:

God I am eager for You to speak to me, and when You do, I will do it!